

Summary of the Friday Sermon Delivered By Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV, On 3rd July 1998, in San Jose - America

Know that the life of this world is only a game and a diversion and pomposity and a subject of boasting among yourselves, of rivalry in multiplying riches and children. Like the vegetation that sprouts up after the rain rejoicing the tillers. Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; becoming broken pieces of stubble. And in the hereafter there is severe chastisement, as well as forgiveness and Allah's pleasure. And the life of this world is nothing but illusory pleasure.

The Holy Quran. al-Hadid [Iron]: 21.

Before I shed light on this verse and other verses along this theme, I would make a few miscellaneous observations that are usually made in the final sermon of a tour.

I have had some difficult experiences during this tour of America and some pleasing ones. As far as the troubling experiences are concerned I mentioned some of them in the previous sermon.

The pleasant aspect of the general impression of the *Jamat* in America is that a large number of the people with the grace of Allah are clear with respect to their financial contributions. That is most of those on the borderline between affluence and poverty is those who fulfil their duties. Moreover the financial accomplishments of the *Jamat* in America depend upon their very contributions.

My previous sermon should not have the impression that all Professionals and Businessmen are careless in their contributions. I know some of them have been contributing regularly for years and years. But unfortunately there are a very large number of those who are highly capable but have small hearts and were unable to offer anything to their benefactor. In general the contributions of the *Jamat* in America as they stand are commendable.

The Quranic verse recited at the beginning of the sermon does not apply anywhere else in the world as much as it applies to the American society. For example there are many societal afflictions that are the creation of the American lifestyle where life has been made into a mere sport and pastime and glamour and boasting and competing in multiplying riches and children.

In a verse in *Surah al-Munafiqun* [The Hypocrites] the believers have been admonished:

O ye who believe! Let not your property and your offspring distract you from the remembrance of Allah. For whoever behaves so - it is they who are the losers.¹

The cursory and occasional commemoration of those who forget to remember Allah due to their love of wealth and children cannot change the state of their hearts:

Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and for you. Killing them is a great sin.²

¹ *The Holy Quran.* al-Munafiqun [The Hypocrites]: 10.

Here it is worth noting that the Arabs never killed their children from fear of a lack of provisions and poverty but they would kill a daughter at birth for fear of being shamed. So this was a Prophecy about the future when people want fewer children and that they be wealthy and respected so that the wealth should not be divided among too many of them. This does not mention killing after having been born but also alludes to methods of contraception which these days is given names such as Family Planning.

Some of the Prophetic *Ahadith* draw attention to respect towards one's offspring and to their upbringing. Parents are in the habit of telling off children if they are negligent of worldly affairs but if they are negligent in matters pertaining to faith they do not care about it. The Holy Prophet ﷺ states that :

Ayyub bin Musa narrated from his father, he from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah said: 'There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.'³

... They should only be brought up with recourse to mercy and not to be made inheritors in fact *وَأَجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا* ['and make *each* of us a leader of the righteous']⁴ should be regarded so that this offspring should serve the faith by praying for him after him. But how many pray in this manner for their children - That their children may be soldiers of the faith? ... Very few indeed. Most are totally unaware as to why they strive for their children and most have no other purpose but to make them inheritors and only desire that nobody else would claim a share or come to possess [what is] their wealth but remember well that this way completely ruins the faith.

Thus there should only be the desire for children to serve the faith.⁵

Mercy is the fundamental component of upbringing because the efforts made to secure an inheritance only damages children and that effort is false, the real effort should be that *وَأَجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا*.

During the *Mulaqats* [personal audiences] I saw such boys and girls who had no inkling of faith in their eyes. Girls' had covered their heads but it was obvious that they were doing so for the first time just to meet me. Such a situation doubles my pain because it is as if they are idolising me. I am just a humble man of Almighty God. Why do they fear me? They should fear God who is the Omnipotent.

I have decided that in future the *Jamat* should stop introducing those who they know to be so because they only serve to deceive themselves. The sacred statements of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) recommend asking for offspring who are soldiers of the faith, who serve to promulgate the message of Islam. In this relation the prayers of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) and his upbringing are a model for us. The *Jamat* in America need to pay attention to their children more than ever before.

I feel their pain when they wait for hours to meet me and their trouble is felt in my heart every single moment but it cannot be helped. Sometimes the meeting of just a few moments becomes a cherished treasure. In the future people would yearn to see even a glimpse the Caliph.

² *The Holy Quran*. Bani Israel [Children of Israel]: 32.

³ Tirmidhi, Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa. *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*.

⁴ And those who say 'Our Lord! May our spouses and children delight our eyes and make *each* of us a leader of the righteous.'

The Holy Quran. al-Furqan [The Criterion]: 75.

⁵ Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam. *Malfuzat*: iii. 599, 600.

I feel extreme anxiety for those who do not pay their full contributions but not out of anger but out of pain. I do not consider them any less but pity their self-afflicted cruelty.

I especially draw attention to the upbringing of children and safeguarding them from the ill influences of a foreign culture. May Allah enable you to protect yourselves and to protect your faith. Remember me in your prayers as well so that Allah the Almighty may [enable me to] achieve the purposes for which I have come here.

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